With a deep sense of gratitude, I wish to express my indebtedness to Prof. (Dr.) C. Mohanakumaran Nair, Dean, College of Fisheries, Panangad and my supervising guide who not only encouraged me throughout my academic career but also inspired me and instilled great enthusiasm for fixing targets for the future. My Professor always conquered me also with his magical and lovely wings, unstinted guidance, constructive criticism and affectionate treatment not only throughout the period of this particular study but during my entire academic life so far, as well.

I also place on record my sincere thanks to Dr. D.D. Nambudiri, Dr. K.S. Purushan (former Deans, College of Fisheries), (Dr.) Susheela Jose, Former Head, Department of Aquaculture, Dr. M.V. Mohan, Former Associate Professor, College of Fisheries, Dr. P.M. Sherief (Professor and Head), Dr. S. Krishnakumar and Dr. Sajan George, Department of Processing Technology, College of Fisheries, Dr. K.V. Jayachandran (Professor and Head), Dr. T.M. Jose, Dr. T.V. Anna Mercy and Dr. J. Rajasekhara Nair, Department of Fishery Biology, Dr. George Mathew, Head, Department of Fishery Engineering, Dr. B. Manoj Kumar, Head, Department of Fishing Technology, Dr. M.S. Raju (Professor and Head), Dr. K.M. Mathew, Smt. V. Malika, Smt. Alphy Korath, Sri. Mathew Sebastian, Dr. V. Ambulkumar, Dr. Daisy C. Kappen, Department of Management Studies and Mr. Kunjunmuhammed, Librarian, College of Fisheries for their kind support.

Mrs. Manju K.G., Mrs. Shyla G., Lecturers, Vocational Higher Secondary Education, Mr. Anilkumar P., Deputy Director, RGCA, Mr. N.S. Sameer & K.V. Soumya C. Bose, Technical Assistants, Dr. Joice Abraham & Dr. Anvar Ali, Aquaculture Experts, Department of Fisheries, Mr. Shiju, P., C.M.F.R.I., Sri. George Mash (Fish Exporter) and Mr. Shijil, K.S. are thankfully remembered.

Ever since I met Dr. N.C. Induchoodan, Divisional Forest Officer, Department of Forest he has been kind enough to me for extending all the privileges and support for the smooth conduct of my forest related fisheries research. Only because of his constant encouragement I could collect the specimens of Hump backed mahseer from the up-streams of Chaliyar river. His colleagues, Mr. A. Renjan and Mr. Sheikh Hyder Hussain Divisional Forest Officers, Mr. V. Madhusoodanan, Ranger, Mr. P.K. Manoharan, Mr. M.P. Anil Kumar and Mr. P. Vinod serving the Department and many others helped me in one way or the other during my work.
Dr. K. Rama Devi, Scientist F, Zoological Survey of India, Chennai has been kind enough to me for identifying the mahseer samples when they were taken to her office at Chennai. She inspired me to pursue a research career in the taxonomy of the fishes of the Western Ghats. I extend my sincere gratitude to her also.

The services rendered by my colleagues of the Department of Aquaculture, Dr. S. Shyama, Dr. Devika Pillai, Associate Professors, Mr. Manoj C.K., Mrs. Navya R., Dr. Juliet Joseph, Mr. V.R.Sreenath, Mr. Sarath V.S., Mr. Aneesh, Mr. Shyam Kumar M.S, Kum. Jisha P., Kum. Divya Haridas, Mr. T.K. Gopalakrishnan and Mrs. V.I Kadeeja Beevi who serve the Department in various positions are gratefully acknowledged.

I thank all members of the tribal colonies, Pokalappara, Peringalkuthu and Mukkampuzha for co-operating with my studies. Mr. Subrahmanian, Mooppan, Pokalappara, Mr. Kumaran, Mooppan, Peringalkuthu and Mr. Kanmani, Mukkampuzha did not hesitate to accompany me any time to the interior forest areas to collect specimens whenever I approached them. With their regular association for the last seven years, I also acquired the courage to keep cool and react normally on the sight of any wild animals during fish sampling.

I wish to thank Dr. Prakash Nautiyal, the 'Mahseer Man' of India and his research team including Mr. Asheesh Sivam and Kum. Jyoti Verma for their kind help extended towards providing good quantum of literature and also for helping me to study the micro flora and fauna of the region. I am also thanking Dr. N. Basavaraja, Professor, Mangalore Fisheries College for providing relevant literature and photographs.

I will fail in my duty if I do not mention about Dr. C. P. Shaji, the great taxonomist and natural biologist of my time for his whole hearted support extended throughout the study. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank Dr. M.C. Nandeesha who has been kind enough to motivate me throughout my study. My former student, Kum. S. Reshmi also helped me a lot towards the completion of this work. Mr. Suresh C.K., my friend always accompanied me during the visits made to Karnataka and Coorg in search of the great Mahseers and related information.

Dr. A. Gopalakrishnan and Dr. V. S. Basheer, Principal Scientist & Officer-in-Charge and Senior Scientist respectively and Dr. Divya P.R., Scientist, Regional Office, NBFGR, Kochi are gratefully acknowledged for their services extended for the molecular
studies. Dr. K.S. Sobhana and Dr. Boby Ignatius, Senior Scientists, CMFRI, Kochi are also thankfully remembered.

I am thankful to the Kerala Agricultural University, Department of Forests and Wildlife, Government of Kerala and Department of Science and Technology, Government of India for directly or indirectly supporting me towards the materialization of my research programme.

I thank my wife, Mrs. N. Anjana who has been very patient and kind enough for shouldering the complete responsibility of my family without any complaints during the period of my study. Her expertise in computer skills has eased my job significantly for getting my thesis typed, formatted and edited.

I would like to thank Mr. Syam lal and Mr. Binoop of M/s Indu Photos for typesetting, formatting and designing this document. I am ever thankful to Padmavathi Teacher, Mr. Venugopal and Mr. Nandakumar for their constant support extended to me.

Once again I thank one and all who helped me in one way or the other for the completion of the research programme.

K. Dinesh